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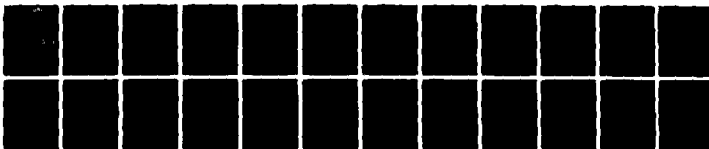
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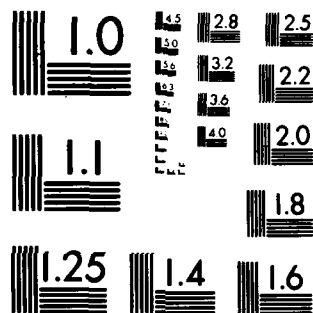
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This report reviews major psychological models of competence for their potential applicability to research on ethnocultural factors in social competence assessment. Historical background is provided on trait, environmentalist, and interactional theories which have guided past research.

A multi-dimensional analysis of selected models of competence is provided to identify salient neglected aspects of the relationship of culture to competence. This analysis includes the variables of: (1) affect, (2) autonomy,

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3) cognition, 4) motivation, 5) socialization, 6) stability, 7) process, and  
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interpersonal conceptual frameworks of competence; the 12) Macro level and  
13) micro level units of analysis for competence; and the 14) objective and  
15) subjective levels of competence. Important theoretical, methodological  
and empirical questions related to culture and competence are proposed.

# Summary

The purpose of this report is to review major psychological models of competence for their potential applicability to research on ethnocultural factors in social competence assessment. Historical background is provided on trait, environmentalist and interactional theories which have guided much of the past research. These approaches are contrasted with non-Western psychologies which may provide more dynamic models of the competent person.

A multi-dimensional analysis of selected models of competence is provided to identify salient neglected aspects of the relationship of culture to competence. This analysis includes the variables of: 1) Affect, 2) Autonomy, 3) Cognition, 4) Motivation, 5) Socialization, 6) Stability, 7) Process, and 8) Self-Symbol Formation; the 9) Ethnocultural, 10) Interactional, and 11) Interpersonal conceptual frameworks of competence; the 12) Macro Level and 13) Micro Level units of analysis for competence; and the 14) Objective and 15) Subjective levels of competence. Important theoretical, methodological and empirical questions related to culture and competence are proposed.

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL MODELS FOR ASSESSING ETHNOCULTURAL FACTORS IN SOCIAL COMPETENCE.

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## Introduction

It is the sad fate of anyone who attempts to examine the relationship of culture and competence that they must deal simultaneously with disparate theoretical and empirical literatures that show little awareness or concern with one another's existence. It is probably only in the subdiscipline of personality and culture research that the notion of competence implicitly enters the areas of overlapping concerns of the major disciplines of anthropology and psychology. Since culture and personality research has not enjoyed a prominent position or engaged a large share of the research energies of either psychology or anthropology, it is also not surprising that research linking competence and culture has drawn relatively little attention. The psychological research tradition has emphasized research on the incompetent or maladjusted person and the anthropological research tradition has focused more on the ideal person who embodies the cultural norm.

While simple neglect due to more pressing disciplinary concerns may account for the paucity of research on culture and competence, there may be other more serious scientifically based reasons for the apparent neglect. For example, one must ask if the concept of competence contributes anything new conceptually or merely serves as a synonymous term for other more easily operationalized and more frequently used concepts already well established in the literature. Heath (1977), for example, suggests that the terms, such as self-

actualization, mental health, and competence, all of which connote effectiveness of functioning, may be subsumed under the concept of maturity. He also asserts that there is considerable agreement in the literature about the dimensions that define a maturing person.

Perhaps more serious than the terminological issues are the problems of metapsychology implied by the concept of competence when viewed from different cultural standpoints. Examining the relationship of culture and competence may require dealing with ultimate questions about what people are to be in their cultures and involve inevitable value assumptions that neither anthropology nor psychology wish to make. Considered from the cultural ecology standpoint, there are those who would assert the relativist position in which no general criteria of cultural or behavioral excellence are possible (e.g., Berry, 1975). It may also be that the predominantly non-spiritual stances of Western psychology, by contrast with the pervasive spiritual orientation toward life in general of many non-Western psychologies, produces a paradigm clash which is currently insurmountable.

Despite these drawbacks, there are compelling reasons to refocus research attention on the positive end of the spectrum of human adaptation with which culture and competence would be concerned. We have applied the term competence to that complex array of internal and external human activities which constitute a core of culturally

valued behaviors denoting effective adaptation by a given culture's terms. In this paper we have had the relatively modest goal of providing a sample of psychological models of competence that seem relevant to culture factors. We have also attempted to consider some of the variables that may provide for a meaningful integration of both psychological and anthropological concepts that bear on the relationship of culture to competence. This is a murky area indeed and one in which theoretical pitfalls are encountered at every turn.

#### Historical Background

Considered from a Western perspective, the notion of competence has a relatively long history. For example, Goldfried and D'Zurilla (1969) quote the ultimate source, Socrates, who defined competence as follows:

"Those who manage well the circumstances which they encounter daily, and who possess judgement which is accurate in meeting occasions as they arise and rarely miss the expedient courses of action (p. 166)."

This definition contains most of the important elements of contemporary Western views of competence, even though operational terminology may make them appear much more scientific, and greater specificity of its components has indeed improved upon it. Although there were undoubtedly many other theorists of competence both before and after Socrates, it appears to have been given its greatest scientific recognition in the 20th century.

Three contemporary Western orientations are discernible in the

research which bears on competence and competent behavior: 1) the drive-instinct-motive orientation, 2) the self concept-autonomy orientation, 3) the personality trait orientation.

White (1959) has probably been the foremost proponent of the drive-instinct motive orientation to competence, although Groos (1901) was one of the first to postulate a need that humans have for producing effects (e.g., the child's "joy in being a cause"). Hendrick (1942) subsequently proposed an instinct to mastery based upon an inborn drive to do and to learn how to do. By contrast, Fenichel (1945) presented the psychoanalytic view by attributing mastery of the environment as an aim to reduce anxiety, rather than as instinctually based, and Mowrer (1950) reinforced the view that anxiety-reduction was the motivating factor in ego development. Mittleman (1954) proposed a "motility" concept as a basic urge along with Freudian oral, excretory, and genital urges. Dollard and Miller (1950) followed with their concept of drive and attendant reinforcement theory. Obviously, all of these theorists were heavily influenced by Freudian drive theory (1932) and based their thinking on physiological views of human behavior.

The self-concept/autonomy orientation closely paralleled the instinct-drive-motive theory. Angyal (1941) is perhaps the most renowned proponent of the organism's active striving for mastery over the environment and proposed a "general dynamic trend" toward

an increase in autonomy. He was also one of the first contemporary theorists to view humans as internally determining dominators of the environment as opposed to purely reactive organisms. From a Freudian perspective, Kardiner (1947) proposed an effective ego (i.e., an autonomous energy source) built along the same lines as the psychoanalytic model of ego development but more positively oriented to the successful rather than the conflictual experiences in life. Hartmann (1950) developed the psychoanalytic trend with his conception of the autonomous factor in the developed ego, which in turn mediated instinctual drives and environmental demands. Erikson (1952) originated the concept of ego identity and "a sense of industry" while developing his thoughts on libido theory and the sequential development of the ego. Erikson's views, perhaps more than any other, epitomized the growing discontentment with the instinct-drive-motive theories. With the parallel growth of Murray's (1938) need-pressure theory and Allport's (1937) insistence on the functional autonomy of motives, it was only a matter of time before the original assumption of Goldstein's (1940) master tendency toward self-actualization was developed and consolidated by Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1961).

With the influence of the major theorists of the trait orientation (e.g., Cattell, 1959; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1969; Guilford, 1959) the 1950's and 1960's saw a dramatic increase in research along these



lines and there is currently a lively debate in the literature regarding the proper role of traits in explaining human behavior (e.g., Argyle and Little, 1972; Epstein, 1977). Parallel with these developments was the emergence of environmental theorists dating back to Lewin (1909) who stressed the importance of situation variables in the determination of human behavior. The combination of the trait with the environmentalist views of human behavior and their relevance to issues of competence is probably best expressed in the current trends of interactional psychology which appear to foreshadow important changes in the direction of future research (e.g., Endler and Magnusson, 1976; Magnusson and Endler, 1977).

Considered from the standpoint of competence these lines of development in Western psychology have perhaps been best summarized by Goldfried and D'Zurilla (1980) who identify three major definitions: 1) an achievement approach with emphasis on the social attainments of the individual in the various major areas of living within a particular society (e.g., Phillips and Cowitz, 1963; Lanyon, 1967); 2) an internal antecedents approach in which the attitudes, motives, personality dynamics and traits are identified which are presumed to bear some relationship to effective behavior (e.g., Doll, 1963; Foote & Cottrell, 1966; Brewster-Smith, 1966); and 3) a behavior-environment interactionism approach which translates operationally into analysis of effective responses to specific problematic life

situations (e.g., Hamburg & Adams, 1967; Goldfried & D'Zurilla, 1980).

All of the approaches described above constitute a personality theory, whether implicit or explicit, in which the locus of competence is firmly rooted in the individual. These approaches are also based on a relatively short tradition of scientific personality research in Western psychology which contrasts with the considerably longer tradition of personality theory in many non-Western psychologies. It is therefore instructive to contrast Western views with non-Western views of personality for the light they may shed on the relationship of culture and competence.

Tart (1975) is probably the foremost proponent of the contribution that the non-Western "spiritual psychologies," many of which are based on centuries old traditions, can make to an understanding of human personality. He has extensively examined the assumptions underlying Western scientific psychology in an attempt to bridge the existing gaps between it and spiritual psychologies, such as Zen Buddhism, Indian yoga and Sufism. It is his analysis of Western assumptions about personality which are most pertinent to the examination of the relationship of culture and competence. The example below of an assumption of Western psychology, followed by the non-Western view of a similar human experience illustrates the contrasting approaches that may be taken (Tart, 1975, p. 80).

Western Assumption: A healthy personality is one which allows the individual to be well-adjusted in terms of his culture.

Non-Western View: The spiritual psychologies, taking a longer and wider perspective, would see adjustment to one's society as a relatively minor achievement, and, if the culture perpetuates patterns judged as delusory or evil, then someone who actually wishes to grow spiritually should definitely not be well adjusted to his culture, although he may have to dissimulate adjustment in order to avoid friction and harassment that would divert energies from his spiritual goals.

In what is the only currently available summary of Asian personality theory, Pedersen (1977) reiterates many of Tart's points, but takes a slightly different focus on certain personality variables that are more directly related to Western theories. He presents Western psychologies as stressing the individual, achievement motivation, rationally defined evidence, the scientific method, and direct self-disclosure. By contrast, Asian theories are characterized as emphasizing corporate welfare, experiential evidence, intuitive logic, religio-philosophical methods and subtle indirection in personal relationships. Of greatest pertinence for the relationship of competence to culture is the assertion that the Asian view of basic personality structure

is relational and focused on the space between individuals, rather than individualistic as in Western personality theories. Pedersen also makes a number of other assertions, all of which are in need of empirical verification, that stand in bold contrast to Western views of competence. For example, the notion that the "Hindu ideal of maturity emphasizes continuous dependency relations" or "interdependence in parent-child relationships is the Chinese ideal for personality development" (p. 875) will be seen to contradict Heath's Western-based model of maturity and competence (Heath, 1977).

While Tart and Pedersen present an apparently stark contrast between Western and non-Western views of personality and the definitions of competence that may be derived from them, it is apparently possible to reach different conclusions from the same non-Western sources of information about personality. Heath (1977) concludes from the psychological analysis of mental health principles and views of healthy adult development represented in a number of summaries of non-Western sources on the subject (e.g., Bellah, 1976; Bouwama, 1976; Goleman, 1976; Lapidus, 1976; Neki, 1976; Owens, 1976; Rohlen, 1976; Tseng, 1976; Wei Ming, 1976) that religious traditions agree in most of their basic assumptions about healthy adult growth, but disagree in their emphasis on others. Heath's goal in his analysis was to find evidence for his model of maturing, which is rooted in

Western empirical research on a number of personality dimensions. Coding of the desirable human traits hypothesized by traditional religions which could be included in his model of maturing produced suggestive but very unreliable results. Heath allows that more thorough and objective analyses are needed but also concludes that his cursory survey suggests that a trans-culturally universal model of maturing remains a reasonable possibility.

It has been the primary goal of this all too brief contrast of Western and non-Western views of competence to show the widely divergent views that can be taken of culturally desirable human behavior.

Since there has been so little scientific/scholarly exchange on the metapsychologies that inform the Western and non-Western traditions relating to the relationship of culture to competence, it is hoped that the foregoing material will provide the minimal theoretical background with which to proceed to an analysis of available models of human competence. This will not be an exhaustive analysis. Models of competence have been selected which have either attempted to include cultural variables in their conceptual framework or hold substantial promise of including such variables in future research. With the exception of Arasteh (1976), they are Western in origin.

#### Selected Theories of Competence

Edgar Doll: The Vineland Laboratory

In The Measurement of Social Competence: A Manual for the

Vineland Social Maturity Scale (1953). Doll describes the work which took place in the 1930's and 1940's at the Vineland Laboratory. The essential goal was the assessment of social competence, defined as "the synthesized expression of the progressive independence and responsibility which signify social maturation (p. 17)."<sup>1</sup> The explicit assumptions were that (1) social competence is defined as a functional ability, (2) competence could be measured in terms of maturation, (3) social competence may be seen as a dynamic and functional composite of human traits. Possibly anticipating future trends, Doll defined social competence as the "social adequacy of the individual as a whole (with due regard for age and culture) conceived as a social end result of the physical, physiological, intellectual, habitual, emotional, volitional, educational, occupational aspects of personal growth, adjustment, and attainment which ensue from his constitutional predispositions and environmental impacts (p. 2)." Obviously, Doll was a trait theorist, but he still managed to encompass all three of the approaches identified by Goldfried and D'Zurilla (1969).

Doll also integrated cross-cultural research undertaken with American minorities, such as Longwell's (1935) study of the pre-adolescent Pueblo Indians, Sill's (1936) study of Jewish and Italian subnormal girls, and Eugene Doll's (1937) research on Negroes (which interestingly found that Negroes are constantly retarded in development, but mature relatively early when compared to Caucasians.)

His measurement scale was blatantly middle-class and severely limited by its emphasis on verbal output and inherent assumptions of individual independence, responsibility, and competence—which all lack cross-cultural validity.

#### Footo and Cottrell: Interpersonal Competence

Footo and Cottrell (1965) were among the first to use a process definition of competence. They defined competence as synonymous with ability and credited Sullivan (1950) as the originator of the use of the word "competence" to denote such an ability. According to Footo and Cottrell, competence was "a satisfactory degree of ability for performing certain implied kinds of tasks (p. 38)." Their's was an essentially behavior-bound definition incorporating "health, intelligence, empathy, autonomy, judgement, and creativity (p. 41)." They defined behavior as dynamic, episodic, and situationally specific and expanded the temporal dimension to refer to the utilization of past experiences and future aspirations in an effective organization of present effort. They also expanded the social basis of their definition of competence by asserting that competence is "not dependent upon direction from without but capable of integrating goals with those of others and collaborating in their realization (p. 50)."

Footo and Cottrell elaborated Doll's definition, but were culture-bound by a trait orientation and an ethnocentric emphasis on the value of autonomy and independence for the individual. Their emphasis on the

interpersonal aspect of competence, although immature in development, was an innovation and an indication of the future trend of interactional psychology. They shared an awareness of the cultural issues by recognizing the cultural and subcultural influences on the achievement of interpersonal competence. Unfortunately, they never elaborated on nor accounted for this influence in their approach.

#### Robert White: Motivation for Competence (Effectance)

Robert White (1959) in an article which marked the turning point in the social trend of competence theory postulated not only the achieved capacity of competence but also found it necessary to make competence a motivational concept "because it satisfies an intrinsic need to deal with the environment (p. 316)". White proposed the term "effectance" for the motivational aspect of competence, used to refer to "an organism's capacity to interact effectively with its environment (p. 297)." Effectance referred to neurogenic "energy" derived from the living cells making up the nervous system.

The importance of the learning process in developing competence was also emphasized by White, particularly relationships between the stimulus fields and the effects that can be produced by the individual. White also pointed out the importance of play and investigatory behavior of children, noting the adaptive value of a motivation independent of primary drives in learning about one's environment.

White literally ignored all cross-cultural reference probably be-

cause of the assumed universality of his effectiveness motive. His contribution lies in the area of crossing the boundary into a comparative-physiological psychology. On a physiological level, White's theory may prove cross-culturally applicable (assuming all human physiology is the same), but it may not prove comprehensive enough to cover the territory designated by the term competence.

Wallace: An Abilities Conception of Personality

Wallace (1966) proposes an entirely different view of competent behavior with considerable potential for cross-cultural use. He makes a discrimination between "response predisposition and response capability" and argues that when theorists assume the existence of a need (Murray, 1938) or trait, what they are in fact referring to is a response capability. He actually questions the necessity of referring to motivational inferences--if we have an accurate knowledge of the "breadth and diversity of extant behavioral repertoires in conjunction with detailed knowledge of specific stimulus situations (p. 133)."

An important contribution to competence research made by Wallace is the focus on the conditions under which behavior occurs. His reference to Szasz's (1961) plea for greater situation analysis of psychiatric operations is well directed. It is one of the first attempts to criticize the stronghold of trait theorists in the area of personality and personality assessment.

Wallace, like White, provides an innovative scheme without con-

sidering the implications for cultural research. Although this seriously effects the generality of his model, the application of such an approach would be an asset in cross-cultural competence research, although the implications of such an approach (assuming a learning deficit) could lead to subtle forms of ethnocentrism.

Goldfried and D'Zurilla: A Behavioral-Analytic Model for Assessing

Competence

This model focuses primarily on the assessment of competence and takes as its unit of analysis the effective response of the individual (influenced by past social learning) to specific life situations which are of interest (Goldfried & D'Zurilla, 1969). Following the lead first developed by Argyris (1965 a, b), Goldfried and D'Zurilla define an effective response as a response "to a problematic situation which alters the situation so that it is no longer problematical, and at the same time produces a maximum of other positive consequences and a minimum of negative ones (p. 158)." An individual's total reaction constitutes an effective response, and the evaluation of the response is dependent upon the consequences generated by that response. Competence is defined operationally as the "effectiveness or adequacy with which an individual is capable of responding to the various problematic situations which confront him (p. 161)."

The behavioral-analytic technique developed by Goldfried and D'Zurilla involves (1) situational analysis, (2) response enumeration,

(3) response evaluation, (4) development of a measuring instrument format, and (5) an evaluation of that measure. Situational analysis involves generating specific, but meaningful situations which the individual will encounter and must attempt to deal effectively with; situations eliciting automatic effective responses are not included in this analysis. Response enumeration entails a tally of possible responses. It is used also to further define the situation. Response evaluation requires significant others in a persons environment to judge the effectiveness of those responses enumerated. This is done to improve reliability and validity. Development of a measurement format is a direct extension of the first three steps: content of the items to be used in the measurement instrument and the criteria for scoring are simply derived from the first three steps. The final step, evaluation of the measure, follows the usual criteria for evaluation used in psychological research.

A basic assumption of Goldfried and D'Zurilla is that overall competence is increased when an individual learns to cope independently with problematic situations. In other words, a learning-how-to learn (deutero-learning) approach is the best approach, according to the authors, and this would appear to have considerable significance for the learning of cultural behaviors.

With its value-based emphasis on individuality and independence as the most effective problem-solving strategy, this model may have limited cross-cultural applicability, but it appears eminently adaptable

as a research strategy if the criteria of effectiveness can be made more culturally appropriate.

French, Rodgers, and Cobb: Adjustment as Person-Environment Fit

Another Western model that would appear to have potential for cross-cultural use is that of French, Rodgers, and Cobb (1974) who define adjustment as the goodness of fit between the characteristics of the person and the properties of his environment. This entails an objective and subjective dimension to self concept and environment. There are two demands made of the individual: the motive of the person and the demands located in the environment, for example, role requirements. The supplies needed to meet these demands are simply a person's abilities or the environmental ability to meet demands with which a person is faced.

Four criteria of mental health are proposed: (1) objective person-environment fit, (2) subjective person-environment fit, (3) contact with reality, (4) accuracy of self assessment.

This model provides for eight adjustive behaviors depending upon the conditions of person and environment. It is a mathematically oriented outgrowth of Lezenus, Averill, & Opton's (1974) original psychodynamic model and may be adaptable to cross-cultural situations, although problems may arise in applying the concepts of needs and demands as were originally proposed by Murray's (1938) need-pressure theory. It is also unclear if this model could be adapted to the variety of interpersonal tasks found in different sociocultural environ-

ments. Another essential lack for cross-cultural research purposes is an affective variable beyond simple subjective person-environment fit.

M. Brewster-Smith: Socialization for Competence

One of the first to link competence with a cross-cultural perspective is M. Brewster-Smith (1968). Brewster-Smith defines competence as involving effective role performance for self and for society and posits a core of interrelated personal attributes which play a crucial role in the effectiveness of the person's interaction with the environment. A circular developmental path of causation is suggested which underlies a cluster of trait-like characteristics of effectiveness. These trait-like characteristics are to be found in the "attitudes and the motives related to the self, as the entity around which a person's enduring orientations to the world are organized (p. 278)." Thus, early effective interaction with the environment leads the individual to accrue an effective orientation to the world which is continually strengthened by current and former success. Off to a less effective start, the individual learns to expect failure after encountering failure. Changing the life course involves breaking into these well-entrenched circles of social causation and turning vicious into benign circles.

In Brewster-Smith's model the competent self incorporates within a sense of efficacy or potency (a positive attitude toward the self), an attitude of hope (a positive attitude toward the world), and a concomitant behavioral orientation which places the person into the kinds

of interactions which bring closure to the benign circle. The generalized core of attitudes and behavioral orientations which constitute the core of the competent self are suggested as transculturally relevant in principle, even though different cultures would value the competence syndrome differently in terms of specific goals and the knowledge and skill required to achieve them. Empirical verification of the hypothesis across cultures has yet to be demonstrated.

An important aspect of competent selfhood in this model lies in the socialization of the child. Brewster-Smith asserts that there are two major constructive (or destructive, as the case may be) forces influencing the development of the sense of self: (1) the feedback the child gets about his/her effect on the physical environment, and (2) perhaps more importantly, the feedback from the individual's social environment through the mirror of social response and appraisal. These two forces intertwine to influence the individual's perception of self.

Brewster-Smith is one of the first theorists to deal with the relationship of social structure and competence. There are three strategic aspects of social structure which directly influence competent selfhood: opportunity, respect, and power. Power is considered crucial because it leads to respect and opportunity. However, it is at this point that Brewster-Smith's model begins to break down when considered cross-culturally, since he suggests that opportunity offered without the sharing of power breeds paternalism, accentuates

dependence, and leads to a resentment that can be viewed as ingratitude. Although these arguments are fortified with examples of the inadequacy of "paternalism", Brewster-Smith neglects at least one very important exception--the Japanese, and probably other Asian cultures as well. According to theorists of these cultures, there is no sharing of social power between the horizontal levels of hierarchical structures, and no resentment ensues (Nakane, 1972). Despite these limitations, Brewster-Smith's framework is heuristic in suggesting the existence of a limited dynamic core of characteristics of the competent individual which may be operationalized for a given culture and tested empirically.

Brewster-Smith is also one of the few theorists to deal with "deviant" forms of competence. He notes, for example, that many slum youth in American culture channel all their competence into socially unrewarded directions. Although he focuses on juvenile delinquents, these concepts can be expanded to include other "marginal" persons, such as the mentally ill (e.g., Dabrowski, 1974), and cross-cultural researchers. There are many other examples of nominal incompetence which may in fact be highly competent when situation and context variables are considered.

#### Arasteh: Final Personality Integration

Arasteh (1975) is a non-Western psychologist with a background in Sufi mysticism who has contributed to the theoretical research on

personality integration.

Arasteh relies heavily on Erikson's (1959) theory of identity development in children but goes beyond both Erikson and Sullivan (1953) by emphasizing the continuous nature of identity acquisition beyond adolescence. According to Arasteh, there are multiple identities, hierarchies of identities and a succession of identities which culminate in an "autonomous person who has mastered the last and most critical crisis of existential identity formation (p. 24)."

Arasteh notes that in Western terms ultimate maturity is objectification of the ego and the social institution. Eastern rationalism at one time held a similar view. His concept of final personality integration, "does not concern itself with the objectification of the ego, but with the liberation from the ego. The fact that man can liberate himself from social drives, devalue systems, and re-integrate himself, demonstrates that he is an autonomous being. This autonomy reveals man's independence from cultural drives in the transcultural state (the view of rational Eastern thinkers--the point past objectification of the ego) (p. 55)." Final integration is a universal state transcending time, place, and degree of culture. It is a universal in every sense of the word including applicability to all other cultures.

Arasteh provides a brief description of what final integration entails in several diverse cultures. In Zen Buddhist cultures, final



Integration is the state of deciphering koan (the state of enlightenment). Koen is "what everyone brings into this world at his birth and tries to decipher before he dies," while enlightenment is the situation in which a person is completely oriented to reality outside and within himself; he is fully aware of his state (Fromm, et al, 1960, p. 115). "In Sufism, it is an individuality in nonindividuality; becoming creative truth; passing from I-ness to he-ness to one-ness... The Chinese express it as Tao, a fulfillment, a beginning, and end, and complete realization of the meaning of existence in innate things... Comparatively, in Western thought, it is expressed as insight in the dynamic sense (Fromm-Reichman, 1950); (Arasteh, 1975, p. 56)."

The concept of reality proposed by Arasteh is related to maturity through the awareness of various realities and the appreciation of multiple realities. It is significant that all Western and Eastern ways of attaining maturity in the adult personality have recognized as an essential quality the ability to become aware of multiple realities (Stein and Vidich, 1950). "Final integration is marked by an 'intense awareness of various spheres of reality' (p. 81)." The developmental stages of this awareness (going from a closed system to an open system of rationalism and trans-culturalism) is evident in Far Eastern and Western history (p. 60).

Arasteh's model reads, at times, like a Far Eastern paradox making moot the relationship of culture to competence by positing a final stage of independence from cultural drives to the transcultural

state. It is invaluable in its insight into what other cultures designate as final integration. Unfortunately, even Arasteh is caught up in Western logic in his writing. His use of autonomy and identity are relatively different from the Western connotation, yet he continues to use these terms without emphasizing this difference. This provides a confusing orientation to his concept of reality and the "attainment" of successive identities and multiple realities. Nonetheless, this is one of the few introductions to non-Western structures of maturity. In this analysis, one could substitute the concept of competence for maturity (following Heath's example, 1977), and produce a non-Western view of ultimate competence.

#### William Bowerman: Subjective Competence

One of the most comprehensive recent theoretical approaches to competence has been proposed by Bowerman (1976). Based on two motivational assumptions (1) that people want to act effectively, and (2) people try to maximize their self-esteem, this theory takes Heider (1944) a step further in delineating an attributional process which determines subjective competence. Self-referent causal attributions and their relationship to behavior and the effects of behavior form the core of the theory. The components of self-referent causal attributions include actor--action--effect--effect. Subjective competence is an interaction (or multiplicative function) of these attribution components. Bowerman, like Lazarus, et al (1974), is one of the first

theories to include an affective component, and expands the definition of competence beyond simple effectiveness to one involving interaction with the physical and social environment.

Of major importance in this theory is the manner in which the individual posits causal elements in an action--effect--effect sequence. Positive and negative subjective competence are derived from differing combinations of these components, and by varying the positive or negative loading of the attributional links between them, different subjective competence structures are formed. For example, positive subjective competence is described by the following behavior sequence: the actor approaches (+) the prevention (-) of a negative effect (-). Thus, the actor actively prevents an action that would have caused the occurrence of a negatively loaded effect. An example of negative subjective competence is described in the following sequence: an actor approaches (+) an action that causes (+) a negative effect (-). Three attributional components vary in these sequences: (1) an actor either approaches (+) or avoids (-), (2) causes (+) or does not cause (-) an action, (3) which leads to positive (+) or negative (-) effect. These attributional sequences form "paths" to positive or negative subjective competence with several factors influencing these paths. Included among influencing factors are content, perceived affective consequences of actions, the locus of attribution, temporal perspective, evaluative criteria, generality of the sequence,

certainly of belief about the sequence, awareness of one's position as actor in a behavioral sequence, flexibility of the values in the attribution sequence, accuracy of fit with reality, and contact with the environment. This is obviously a very complicated multidimensional theory that is not easily presented in summary form.

The motivational hypothesis underlying the theory is that the individual will attempt to maximize subjective competence. An important aspect involves predicting the particular sequence of action the individual will choose. Bowerman makes an innovative contribution by asserting that the individual will opt for a sequence of less subjective utility (contrary to the achievement motivation hypothesis, or cost-benefits theory), if the action is associated with much higher personal responsibility. He fortifies his arguments with White's (1959) notions of effectance motivation and deCharms's (1968) origin-pawn concept, both of which emphasize the individual's perception of him/herself as the source of effects on their environment. Of potentially critical importance for understanding culturally different attributional processes is Bowerman's notion of higher order competence, which involves one's view of one's own subjective competence. Space does not permit an examination of the complex attributional linkages between overt behaviors and covert behaviors, but the implications for understanding culturally "inscrutable" behaviors should be apparent.

Bowerman has melded four theoretical approaches (effectance motivation, origin-pawn concept, dissonance theory, and attribution

theory) into the framework of subjective competence. Although its eventual value is to be determined, even the cursory discussion of it is some indication of its breadth. By integrating a number of former less-adequate theories into a new framework which better explains a particular phenomena, it fulfills one of the major requirements of a "new" theory. Its application to cross-cultural research on competence has not been developed. Hopefully, Bowerman will include the cultural dimension in future presentation of the theory, thereby increasing the validity of generalizations derived from it.

#### Douglas Heath: Maturity and Competence

Heath (1977) provides the first comprehensive and rigorous model of maturity directed at cross-cultural issues. "Maturity refers to universal genotypic developmental dimensions... and is inferred from the type and range of tasks, roles, and situations in which a person functions effectively... Competence refers to effectiveness in relating to some specific environmental expectation or task... to identify competence requires that we evaluate a person's level of skill in relation to what is required by the task (p. 35)." Maturity can be viewed as a determinant of generalized competence.

The model, which was induced from previous research, theories about healthy persons, and longitudinal studies of student development in college, postulates a number of hypotheses concerning how the mature person differs from the immature person. More mature persons are viewed as more aware of their 1) cognitive process, 2) self

concept, 3) values, and 4) their relationships to others. These four personality dimensions are systematically related to dimensions of maturing which include 1) symbolization (language, the ability to represent reality imaginatively), 2) allocentrism (the ability to take a multiplicity of perspectives), 3) integration (a growing coherence, an increased synthesis), 4) stability, and 5) autonomy (stable structure which provide the basis for autonomous self-regulation). Thus, the hypothesis for any combination of personality and maturity variables is linear positive (i.e., the mature person is better able to use symbolization processes to enhance the self-concept; the mature person is more allocentric in personal relations).

Maturity is a systemic property of the model. A major assumption of the model is that "a person is a constantly changing, open, organized system dependent both on his means of adaptation to others and on the environment for his fulfillment and survival (p. 22)." A second assumption is that all the dimensions of the model are interdependent. Heath also assumes that every viable living system "has an intrinsic equilibrating or self regulating principle that preserves its structural integrity (p. 24)."

It is important to note that Heath's model is primarily trait-based (although he does make passing reference to situational variables) in that he believes that the study of effectively functioning or competent persons in diverse cultures will lead to the identification of a universal or recurring set of common core traits. He also contends

that the identification of such a recurring set of core traits descriptive of competent persons selected by numerous and diverse judges from diverse cultural areas will free the concepts of maturity and competence from idiosyncratic personal and cultural values.

To test his model Heath used a multi-faceted and multi-level assessment methodology to compare mature and immature college men within five cultural groups: Mid-Atlantic United States, Sicily, Northern Italy, Eastern and Western Turkey. According to the results a common core set of traits were found to define maturity in the groups studied (Heath, 1977): "ability to anticipate consequences; calm, clear thinking; fulfilling potential; ordered; predictable; purposeful; realistic; reflective; strong convictions; and unshakable (p. 204)."

The model's predictions about differences between psychological test-defined mature and immature men of the three cultures were generally supported. The social judgements and the psychological test indices of maturity, when combined, confirmed 40 percent, weakly confirmed 50 percent, and neither confirmed nor disconfirmed 10 percent of the model's hypotheses.

Although based on a small and relatively restricted cultural sample, Heath's study is a landmark in culture and competence research. It is innovative in many regards and one would hope that subsequent research would be equally innovative in finding measures and methodologies that are not predetermined by trait orientations which minimize the contribution of situational variance to judged effective functioning

in different cultural milieus. A variety of measures were used, from the Rorschach to independent judge ratings, to objective tests, the combination of which greatly enhanced the validity of the results (Hanson and Belleck, 1977). The author's recognition of the limitations of the project insofar as it did not include an Asian sample is reassuring. However, the model has not yet been widely disseminated nor has there been sufficient time to fully digest the many findings and refine the interpretations in light of speculations that might derive from a greatly expanded sample. The Western flavor of the model and the criteria of competence that were provided to judges for making their selections of subjects was defended as not "imperialist" since none of the indigenous study collaborators complained about it. One is reminded of Barnlund's dictum to the effect that when cross-cultural research collaborators reach easy agreement on the definition of the variables of interest, the study should be suspect as not truly cross-cultural (Barnlund, 1978).

The major conceptual problem with Heath's model is the Western orientation which is seen most vividly in the definition of the dimensions and variables which he used. For example, as one moves across cultures, the concept of individual autonomy may be defined differently, or may not even exist in some Far Eastern cultures. While one may agree quite easily with Heath about the possibility of a transcultural, universal model of competence and maturity, a major doubt remains about its validity until data from a sample of Far Eastern cultures can be collected.

Eugene Weinstein: Interpersonal Competence

In this model, interpersonal competence is conceived of as the ability to accomplish interpersonal tasks involving the elicitation of the desired response or set of responses from others. It is similar to the goal-orientation aspects of Doll (1963) and the process-orientation of Foote and Cottrell (1955).

Weinstein's model is developed through successive definitions of the three major elements entailed in the process of establishing and maintaining desired personal identities, both for one's self and for others. This process is founded on the capacity for empathy, which requires the "actor to correctly predict the impact that various lines of action will have on alter's definition of the situation (p. 757)." Capacities underlying empathy include intelligence and cue sensitivity through selective focusing. A second critical element of interpersonal competence is the possession of a large and varied repertoire of lines of action. The third basic element is the intra-personal resources to be capable of employing effective tactics in the situations where they are appropriate.

In developmental terms, empathy evolves from the capacity to distinguish one's self from non-self; to projective role-taking involving perception of the situation as it impinges on the other; to positional role-taking involving reciprocal role enactment (e.g., learning to be a patient to a doctor); and then to personality stereotyping

which requires placing the other in a category based on central features of the persons. The final stage of individuation involves the willingness to abandon stereotypes and base role-taking on direct experience with a specific other.

Weinstein's model is explicitly non-purposive in that he asserts that people are socialized primarily for the skills of role acquisition, acquisition of norms, and learning to take the role of others, all of which involve learning to behave appropriately, and not necessarily effectively. Social learning theory is called on to explain the acquisition of the basic elements of interpersonal competence through incidental learning.

Although clearly relevant to the relation of culture to competence, cross-cultural generality remains to be demonstrated with this model. It is not backed by a strong base of empirical research, even though its explicit assumptions are apparent in implicit form in many of the other competence models in this review. If Weinstein's elements of interpersonal competence are cross-culturally applicable, it should be possible to demonstrate it empirically by systematically varying the ethnicity of actor and alter and examining empathic accuracy in different life situations. Doing so would also contribute to understanding of interethnic competence in terms of the dissimilarity-similarity of actor and alter.

tion of the theories.

#### A Dimensional Analysis of Selected Theories of Competence.

A schematic summary of the theories of competence is provided in Figure 1. An attempt has been made to show the relative degree of emphasis (High or Low) which each theorist places on the dimensions that were selected for comparison. Although this simplifies the task of comparison and contrast between the different theories, there are some difficulties in interpreting the varying approaches to competence. For example, Arasteh's (1975) treatment of autonomy as a form of transcendence does not follow the use of the same concept by Western theorists (e.g., Foote & Cottrell, 1969). A more careful reading of each theorist's concept of competence is recommended for a finer-grained analysis of differences in emphasis and content.

Although caution is required in interpreting the various theories, certain trends are easily discernible. For example, five major dimensions are strongly emphasized in nearly all the models: (1) autonomy, (2) cognition, (3) micro-level analysis, (4) objective view, and (5) process. One exception occurs to the relatively strong emphasis on the autonomy dimension: rather than emphasizing it, French, Rogers and Cobb's (1974) "subjective demands" concept implies the autonomous dimension. There is uniformly strong emphasis on both the cognitive and micro-level dimensions, which is an indication of their importance in the predominantly behavioristic-Western orienta-

An objective view of competence is taken by all the theorists with the exception of Arasteh (1975) and Bowerman (1978). Arasteh works primarily from a "subjective experience" level and does not deal with the objective aspects of competence even though he does not negate their existence or importance. Bowerman's (1978) emphasis is on what he considers the neglected dimension of subjective competence and he does not pursue the objective dimension with the same intensity as other theorists.

The process approach which is common to most of the theories may be an artifact of the trend in psychological literature which is based on social learning and developmental theories. Doll (1963) implies a process emphasis in his theory, but does not develop it in detail. Wallace (1968) views competence from the "here-and-now" perspective, without discussing what precedes competent behaviors, or what may determine future competent behaviors.

Those dimensions which are characterized by a mixed emphasis include (1) self-symbol formation, (2) interactional approach, (3) interpersonal approach, (4) stability, and (5) subjective view. Possibly because content & structure are difficult to define for purposes of comparison, the self-symbol formation dimension is treated very unevenly and is lacking more often than not. If used in the conventional sense as a personal self-symbol (i.e., self-image), it could be very important for comparative analysis. It is a concept implied by almost

all the theories, but the level of conceptual development varies considerably. Doll (1953), White (1959), Wallace (1959), and Goldfried & D'Zurilla (1969) really never define how the self-image affects competent behavior, nor the reciprocal effects of competent behavior on the self-image.

The interactional dimension, which is at the center of one of the major current controversies in personality theory (e.g., Magnusson & Endler, 1977), is dealt with in a majority of the theories. Doll (1953) and Foote and Cottrell (1958) predate the more explicit theories (e.g., Endler and Magnusson, 1976) in this area, while Arasteh (1975) and Heath (1977) are more concerned with personality factors, rather than the interaction between the person and the environment or situation-response units of analysis.

The interpersonal dimension is about evenly divided in emphasis among the theories and reflects the social level of analysis that is characteristic of the theory being considered. The dimension of stability is also present as an aspect of most theories; however, several of the more fully developed theories (e.g., Wallace, 1959; Goldfried & D'Zurilla; Weinstein, 1969; Heath, 1977) deal with the integrative capacities involved in competence in an indirect way or suggest its importance without developing it.

The subjective dimension, which places emphasis on the efficacy of internal behaviors, is present in the majority of the theories but varies in the explicitness with which it is treated. It is closely related

|                              | AFFECT: deals with emotional attributional processes as essential component of competence | AUTONOMY: competence defined primarily in terms of striving for increased self-direction | COGNITION: deals with cognitive differentiation as essential component of competence | ETHNOCULTURAL: deals with ethnic & cultural aspects of competence | INTERACTIONAL: deals with situation-response as unit of analysis for competent behavior | INTERPERSONAL: deals with the capability/skill for human relationships | MACRO LEVEL: identifies social system level as unit of analysis for competence | MICRO LEVEL: identifies individual behaviors as unit of analysis for competence | MOTIVATION: defines competence primarily as a drive, motive, or instinct | OBJECTIVE: deals with effectiveness of external (overt) behaviors | PROCESS: competence defined as a developmental sequential phenomena | SELF SYMBOL FORMATION: focuses on personal identity formation as primary goal of competence | SOCIALIZATION: defines adequacy of socialization as basis of competence | STABILITY: competence defined as formation of integrative capacities | SUBJECTIVE: deals with the effectiveness of internal (covert) behaviors |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Doll (1953)                  | L   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Foote & Cottrell (1958)      | L   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| White (1959)                 | L   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Wallace (1959)               | L   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Goldfried & D'Zurilla (1969) | L   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| French, Rogers & Cobb (1974) | L   | L  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Weinstein (1969)             | H   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Eisnerman (1978)             | H   | H  | H  | L   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Arasteh (1975)               | L   | H  | H  | H   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| M. B. Smith (1966)           | L   | H  | H  | H   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |
| Heath (1977)                 | L   | H  | H  | H   | L   | L  | L  | H   | L  | H   | L   | L   | L   | H  | L   |

Figure 1. A Dimensional Analysis of Selected Theories of Competence

H = high emphasis L = low or negligible emphasis

to the cognitive dimension which is an element of all the theories but relates more to the effectiveness of the cognitions involved in competence. Bowerman (1978) is easily the most explicit theorist in this regard, even though French, Rogers & Cobb (1974) acknowledge the subjective dimension in their theoretical equations. Anastasi (1975) develops subjective competence as successive "integrations" on a strictly private level, and Brewster-Smith (1988) points to the primacy of one's feelings of efficacy. Heath (1977) also emphasizes this in his theory. White (1988), Brewster-Smith (1988) and Heath (1977) all contend that feedback about the effects of one's behavior on the environment are required for effective functioning, but how this process works is left to Bowerman (1978) to delineate in detail.

Socialization is a relatively neglected dimension in all the theories. How competence develops is, of course, an important question and one not easily answered with available theories. Those theorists that were characterized as giving socialization low emphasis were primarily concerned with current competent behaviors and not with the precursors of these behaviors. Weinstein (1988) is perhaps the most explicit source on the socialization of individuals, but is concerned almost exclusively with the socialization of interpersonal competence. Brewster-Smith (1988) discusses the relationship of social structure and the effects on the socialization of the self-symbol, but does not develop the point extensively. The role of socialization processes in competent behaviors is also present in Foote and Cottrell (1988), White

(1988), and Heath (1977) but at a more superficial level than either Weinstein or Brewster-Smith.

There are several seriously neglected dimensions which will be important to consider in future research on competence. These include: (1) affect, (2) cultural influences, (3) macro-level analysis, and (4) motivation. Affect is not present as a dimension of competence until Weinstein (1988), and Bowerman (1978) discuss it, which may reflect the tendency to ignore affect in much of the behaviorally-oriented literature of the fifties and sixties. The cultural dimension also appears to be a victim of the relative recency of cross-cultural research. Anastasi (1975) is the only non-Western theorist in the group and is valuable alone for the contrasts he presents. Brewster-Smith (1988) is very general in his approach to the cultural factors involved in competence, while Heath (1977) provides the first and apparently only empirical cross-cultural study of competence. This work is extremely useful in gaining an understanding of the many variables involved in an empirical analysis of the cultural factors related to competent behavior.

The motivational factors involved in competent behavior are a major neglected dimension. White (1988) was the first to tie it to the physiological realm and is the single source on this topic. Bowerman (1978) and Brewster-Smith (1988) develop the Heiderian notion of the primacy of the self-symbol as a motivational concept, although



Bowerman pursues it in the sense of self-esteem, maintenance rather than a broader notion of self-symbol formation. Macro-level analysis is both a poorly defined and undeveloped dimension. Brewster-Smith (1986) is the only theorist to deal with the social-systems aspects of competence with his notions of circles of social causation and the position effects of social structure on self-efficacy.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

It should be clear by this point that the available conceptual framework for studying the relationship of culture and competence are primarily Western in origin and limited by the cultural assumptions which underlie the disciplines of psychology and anthropology derived from those origins. Moreover, and more telling for future research in this area, they almost all posit the locus of competence within the individual. Having been derived primarily from Western traditions, there is very little emphasis on social system variables and the sociocultural aspects of culture which might provide a more cross-culturally useful framework for examining the relationship of culture and competence.

It should be equally obvious that the empirical basis of culture and competence research is extremely weak and based almost entirely on male samples from a restricted culture range. With these faults of the existing literature in mind, the following questions seem salient for future research:

- 1) Is an empirically verifiable, trans-cultural, sex-independent model of competence possible?
- 2) Is there an invariant sequence, pattern, process, and structure of competence attainment for all cultures?
- 3) What are the characteristics of a model of competence that can deal with the variety of cultural differences in the social environments to which human beings must adapt?
- 4) Is it possible to link the immediately effective coping strategies used in meeting the day-to-day situational demands of a culture to the enabling conditions that cultures may provide for achieving competence?
- 5) Would situational taxonomies derived from varying cultures aide in the assessment of competence within cultures?
- 6) Is it possible to establish a non-individual locus of competence at the group, sub-culture, or the social system level of a culture, and to assess adaptive effectiveness on those levels?
- 7) What are the most effective means of transmitting competence within a culture and what level of cultural organization is most effective for transmitting what competencies?
- 8) What criteria shall be used to assess competence and can these be applied cross-culturally?

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